

BEFORE THE
POSTAL REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, DC 20268-0001

Plover Post Office
Plover, Iowa

Docket No. A2012-92

PUBLIC REPRESENTATIVE COMMENTS

(February 7, 2012)

On November 30, 2011 the Commission received a petition for review of the Postal Service's determination to close the Plover Post Office from Darla Johnson. The Commission subsequently received petitions for review from Allan and Karen Minkler, Eugene B. Van Deest, and the Citizens of Plover. Collectively, the Petitioners are concerned about travelling to other Post Offices further away, the minimal amount of cost savings associated with closing the Plover Post Office, the impact on citizens who do not have internet access, snow removal around rural mailboxes and/or cluster boxes, and loss of a community meeting place. Petitioner Van Deest also suggests keeping the Plover Post Office open, but reducing the hours to 2 hours per day 3 days per week.

The Postal Service responded to the Petitioners' concerns on January 24, 2012 in its Comments Regarding Appeal and in its Final Determination.¹ The Postal Service highlights the convenience of rural delivery for senior citizens and those who face special challenges because services will be available by the rural carrier at roadside mailboxes. Postal Service Comments at 7. For those customers who do not have internet access, the Postal Service explains that those customers can use Stamps by Mail or by calling 1-800-STAMP-24 to purchase stamps. *Id.* at 8. The Postal Service also explains that customers can request special services from rural carrier such as, certified, registered or Express Mail. *Id.*

In regards to the effect on the Plover Community, the Postal Service explains customers will receive similar levels of attention at nearby Post Offices. *Id.* at 12. The

¹ The Final Determination (FD) can be found at Item No. 47 in the Administrative Record (AR).

Postal Service also explains that citizens can meet at other business, churches and residences in the community to socialize and share information. *Id.*

The Postal Service estimates that it will save \$11,734 annually from closing the Plover Post Office. *Id.* at 13. This figure takes into account an estimated \$2,988 in replacement services. AR Item No. 47 at 8.

It does not appear the Postal Service considered the Petitioners' recommendation to only keep the Plover Post Office open a few of hours 2-3 days a week.² The Public Representative believes that the Postal Service should give more consideration to this recommendation because it has the potential to result in cost savings for the Postal Service, while maintaining postal services in the Plover, Iowa community.

The Public Representative finds that no persuasive argument has been presented which would prevent the Commission from affirming the Postal Service's determination to close the Forest Post Office. The Public Representative concludes that the Postal Service has followed applicable procedures, that the decision to close the Forest Post Office is neither arbitrary nor capricious, and that the Postal Service's decision is well supported. However, the Public Representative suggests that the Postal Service give further consideration to keeping the Plover, Iowa open on a less frequent basis.

Respectfully Submitted,

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² It also does not appear that the Petitioners raised this issue until filing their appeal with the Commission. The Administrative Record (AR) also indicates that the Plover Post Office is already only open for a few hours Monday-Saturday, so it is unclear if it would be reasonable to reduce the Plover Post Office's hours further. See AR Item No. 15. However, the Public Representative believes the Postal Service should further consider the Petitioner's recommendation.